

### **Amendments to the Claims**

Please cancel claims 1-3 and add new claims 4-10 as indicated in the following listing of claims which will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

### **Listing of Claims**

Claims 1-3 (Cancelled)

4. (New) An air-curtain forming apparatus to be attached to a semiconductor-fabrication equipment of a minienvironment system, in which system a wafer is conveyed by a wafer hermetic container to the semiconductor-fabrication equipment equipped with a wafer carrying-in opening, comprising:

an annular case to be attached to a periphery of the wafer carrying-in opening, the case having a slit for injecting air forwardly;

an annular air filter tube disposed in the case, the air filter tube having a circular cross section;

an air-supply means for supplying an airflow into the annular air filter tube so that the airflow passes through the air filter tube and is injected from the slit; and

an air-supply tube for connecting the air-supply means and the air filter tube in fluid communication,

thereby forming an air curtain of clean air that has passed the annular air filter tube, between a periphery of an opened opening of the hermetic container and a periphery of the wafer carrying-in opening to prevent ambient air from entering the opened opening of the hermetic container when the hermetic container, which is located in front of the wafer carrying-in opening of the semiconductor fabrication device, is opened.

5. (New) The air-curtain forming apparatus of claim 4, including a guide plate for directing the clean air that has passed the air filter tube.

6. (New) The air-curtain forming apparatus of claim 4, wherein the air-supply tube is attached to a front panel of the semiconductor-fabrication equipment, and wherein the annular case is disposed in a notch formed in the front panel at the periphery of the wafer carrying-in opening formed in the front panel.

7. (New) An air-curtain forming apparatus to be attached to a semiconductor-fabrication equipment of a minienvironment system, in which system a wafer is conveyed by a wafer hermetic container to the semiconductor-fabrication equipment equipped with a wafer carrying-in opening, comprising:

- an annular case to be attached to a periphery of the wafer carrying-in opening, the case having a slit for injecting air forwardly;

- an annular air filter tube disposed in the case, the air filter tube having a circular cross section;

- an air-supply means for supplying an airflow into the annular air filter tube so that the airflow passes through the air filter tube and is injected from the slit; and

- an air-supply tube for connecting the air-supply means and the air filter tube in fluid communication,

thereby forming an air curtain of clean air that has passed the annular air filter tube, between a periphery of the wafer carrying-in opening and a periphery of an opened opening of one hermetic container located in front of the wafer carrying-in opening to prevent ambient air from entering the opening of said hermetic container when the opening of said hermetic container, is opened.

8. (New) The air-curtain forming apparatus of claim 7, including a guide plate for directing the clean air that has passed the air filter tube.

9. (New) The air-curtain forming apparatus of claim 7, wherein the air-supply tube is attached to a front panel of the semiconductor-fabrication equipment, and wherein the annular case is disposed in a notch formed in the front panel at the periphery of the wafer carrying-in opening formed in the front panel.

10. (New) An air curtain forming apparatus for attachment to a semiconductor fabrication equipment, the semiconductor fabrication equipment having an opening that permits a wafer to be transferred to or from a hermetic container, the air curtain forming apparatus comprising:

    cylindrically shaped filters connected to each other, one filter having an air supply tube;

    a filter case forming a rectangular frame and encasing the cylindrically shaped filters, the filter case having a front opening and an aperture wherein the air supply tube passes through the aperture; and

    a guide cover having an injection slit and a guide slit, the guide cover removably mounted on the filter case at its front opening,

    such that air supplied to the air supply tube passes through the injection slit and is ejected from the apparatus through the guide slit forming an air curtain at a gap between the opening and a gateway of the hermetic container to prevent ambient air from entering the hermetic container when the hermetic container is opened.